

We claim:

1. A viral agent comprising a recombinant Marek's disease virus CVI988/X stably transformed with a foreign DNA construct which comprises a long terminal repeat sequence of a reticuloendotheliosis virus, wherein said viral agent is effective to elicit an immune response in a chicken to Marek's disease virus without causing a significant degree of pathogenicity in said chicken.

2. The viral agent of claim 1 wherein said long terminal repeat sequence comprises Sequence ID No. 2.

3. The viral agent of claim 1 wherein said long terminal repeat sequence comprises a Pac I excised DNA segment from a Marek's disease virus having all of the identifying characteristics of strain ATCC PTA-4945.

4. The viral agent of claim 1 wherein said long terminal repeat sequence is inserted upstream of the ICP4 gene of said Marek's disease virus.

5. The viral agent of claim 1 comprising a Marek's disease virus having all of the identifying characteristics of strain ATCC PTA-4945.

6. The viral agent of claim 1 wherein said recombinant Marek's disease virus is viable.

7. The viral agent of claim 1 wherein said Marek's disease virus is cell associated.

8. A vaccine comprising the viral agent of claim 1 in an amount effective to elicit an immune response in a chicken to Marek's disease virus and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

9. A method for protecting a chicken against Marek's disease comprising inoculating said chicken with a vaccine comprising a viral agent in an amount effective to elicit an immune response in a chicken to Marek's disease virus and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent, wherein said viral agent comprises a recombinant Marek's disease virus CVI988/X transformed with a foreign DNA construct which comprises a long terminal repeat sequence of a reticuloendotheliosis virus, and further wherein said viral agent is effective to elicit an immune response in a chicken to Marek's disease virus without causing a significant degree of pathogenicity in said chicken.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said long terminal repeat sequence comprises a Pac I excised DNA segment from a Marek's disease virus having all of the identifying characteristics of strain ATCC PTA-4945.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said long terminal repeat is inserted upstream of the ICP4 gene of said Marek's disease virus.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein said viral agent comprises a Marek's disease virus having all of the identifying characteristics of strain ATCC PTA-4945.

13. The method of claim 9 wherein said viral agent is viable.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein said vaccine is cell associated.

15. A method of making a viral agent effective for protecting a chicken against Marek's disease comprising transforming a Marek's disease virus strain CVI988 with a foreign DNA construct which comprises a long terminal repeat sequence of a reticuloendotheliosis virus.